

Planning & Development

Budget Message

FY 2001/02 and 2002/03

Continuing to provide customer service that exceeds expectations is the focus behind the **Planning and Development Department's** activities. The Department's emphasis on providing effective customer service in an efficient manner continues to be the most significant challenge for each of the Department's 133 employees.

Although the pace of development activity has shown signs of a slight tapering off, the overall volume of development activity remains a constant challenge for the Department. The number of development permits has slightly decreased, yet inspection volumes have increased over the last year as previously permitted development projects wind their way through the construction cycle towards completion. Additional inspector positions authorized in the previous fiscal years have enabled the **Building Division** to continue to maintain established levels of service including next day inspections, after hours and weekend inspections, and three day turnarounds for single family residential permits. The FY2001/2002 adopted budget includes additional funding for training (County staff and the development community) as the Division anticipates the implementation of the recently adopted Statewide Uniform Building Code in 2002.

The **Development Review Division** continues to improve upon its service delivery as evidenced by the reduction in review time for project submittals from three and a half weeks to ten working days. The

Division has also instituted a "fast track" review process for development projects within the County's targeted economic development areas.

The focus of the **Planning Division** continues to include automation initiatives aimed at providing internet access of land use, zoning and the updated Comprehensive Plan, aka Vision 2020, to the community. The Division will also continue in BCC directed initiatives to establish design standards for redevelopment areas of the County.

The **Administration Division** continues to provide management and financial oversight to the entire Department, including the County's Natural Lands, Community Development and Impact Fee programs. Two properties acquired through the Natural Lands program, the Black Hammock and St. Johns Riverside Ranch, are anticipated to be opened to the public in 2002, increasing the number of publicly owned natural lands by over 2,000 acres to a total of approximately 4,500 acres. The FY2001/2002 adopted budget includes a new position to assist in the ongoing responsibilities of the County's Natural Lands program.